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MARK FRANK (1613-1664) A CAROLINE PREACHER

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An edited version of a talk given at the Annual General Meeting of the Society on 5th March, 1994.

The Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary

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MARK FRANK (1613-1664) A CAROLINE PREACHER

by Roger Greenacre

I first discovered the name of Mark Frank from an unlikely source, a French Marist father (of Czech or Polish descent) called Stanislas Cwiertniak. He was for a time on the staff of Notre-Dame de France in Leicester Square and was a fervent ally and supporter of his friend and fellow Marist, the pioneer ecumenist Maurice Villain. I had the privilege of meeting them both when Fr Cwiertniak was at the French church in London and when Roman Catholic priests with a knowledge and sympathetic understanding of Anglicanism were rarer than they now are. I forget now whether I first came across his book, *La Vierge Marie dans la Tradition Anglicane* (published in 1958) and then met him, or first met him and then came across his book. However, I acquired my own copy of the book in 1959. The book consists basically of extracts from Anglican authors (most, but not all, from the 17th century) arranged thematically and with an historical introduction. It was through this book that I first read and was impressed by Mark Frank (in French translation!) and it was my first introduction to his name. Cwiertniak made me curious, but in a way he did not help me much. In his book nothing is said about Frank except that he lived in the 16th century, which was not true (for he was born in 1613 and died in 1664), and the index simply indicates *Sermons on Festivals* and nothing more. However in 1960 I acquired a secondhand copy of *The Blessed Virgin and All the Company of Heaven* by Theodore Wirgman, Archdeacon of Port Elizabeth, published in 1905 and referred to in Cwiertniak's Index. Wirgman's book, dedicated 'in piam memoriam J.H. Newman, S.T.P., Eccl. Romanae Cardinalis et E.B. Pusey, S.T.P., Eccl. Anglicanae Doctoris', correctly places Dr Frank in the 17th century. It was clear to me that Cwiertniak had drawn heavily on Wirgman, but where had Wirgman found Frank's sermons? This question was answered when I consulted a complete set of the *Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology* in the Library of Pusey House, Oxford, and found there the two volumes of *Sermons* by Mark Frank. I hardly need to remind you that in their programme of reawakening Anglicans to their true heritage, the Tractarians had embarked on two ambitious literary projects, *The Library of the Fathers* and *The Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology* (the works of some of the most notable 17th century divines).[1]

Even a superficial reading of Frank's sermons was enough to captivate me; the combination of a vivid and eloquent style, deep learning, spiritual insight and theological profundity was quite remarkable. And yet none of the classic reference works to which I next turned - More & Cross: *Anglicanism; The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church; The Dictionary of English Church History* - even mentioned his name. Only later did I find two books that did mention him. The first was G. Lacey May:

Wings of an Eagle - An Anthology of Caroline Preachers (1955), and the second a work May quotes, W.F. Mitchell's *English Pulpit Oratory from Andrewes to Tillotson* (1932); the latter hails Frank as 'the fairest star in the constellation of the "witty" preachers'. But here I risk digressing a little from the story of my detective-like enquiries[2] into this unknown or forgotten divine. While perusing Frank in Pusey House Library in 1961 I shared my enthusiasm with Donald Allchin, then Librarian of Pusey House. And it is Donald Allchin who has done most to make Frank better known again, both in his contribution to *The Blessed Virgin Mary: Essays by Anglicans*, published in 1963, and in *The Joy of All Creation*, first published in 1984 and very recently brought out in a new edition. But I must also mention a communication read by Professor Howard Root, then Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome, at the 1987 International Mariological Congress in Malta on Frank's Sermon on the Annunciation.[3]

But who was Mark Frank? He was born in 1613 at Brickhill in Buckinghamshire and admitted to Pembroke College, Cambridge in 1627, becoming a Fellow in 1634. In 1641 he preached a courageous sermon at Paul's Cross on obedience to the King and to the liturgy and customs of the Church of England before the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of London at a time when they were strongly backing Parliament in its opposition to Charles I. This sermon attracted the notice and approval of the King but this was of little help to the preacher, for two years later the Earl of Manchester was busy weeding out 'malignants' from the University of Cambridge on behalf of Parliament. Mark Frank was one of those who refused to sign the Solemn League and Covenant and he was deprived of his Fellowship to endure exile and poverty until the Restoration of the Monarchy and of the Church of England in 1660. He was reinstated in his Fellowship in that year and further honours followed thick and fast; he became Archdeacon of St Albans, Treasurer and Prebendary of St Paul's Cathedral, Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rector of Barley, near Cambridge (where he succeeded the distinguished theologian Herbert Thorndike), and in 1662 Master of Pembroke. But two years later in 1664 at the age of 51 he died, and was buried in St Paul's Cathedral.

This bare *curriculum vitae* tells us very little about the man and his personality; nearly everything we know about him comes to us through his only published work, his *Sermons*, first published posthumously in 1672 and re-issued in 1849 in the *Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology*. Of Frank we could repeat what St Gregory the Great wrote of St Benedict, when he claimed that his greatness came entirely from his Rule, the 'key to the teacher's life, for he could not have lived otherwise than he taught'. First of all, however, we need to set him in context, the context of mid 17th century Cambridge.

If the Tractarian revival of the Catholic tradition in the Church of England is called the Oxford Movement because most (but not all) of its leading figures were members of the University of Oxford, its 17th century precursor could perhaps be called the Cambridge Movement.[4] It was above all a reaction against the then dominant Calvinist doctrine of grace and so is often called 'Arminian' after the Dutch theologian Arminius. It was also strongly sacramental, liturgical and patristic in tone

and is often called 'Laudian' after Charles I's Archbishop of Canterbury, himself an Oxford man. Many of the leading protagonists of this school however came from Cambridge and included such pioneers as Bishops Overall, Andrewes (a former Fellow and Master of Pembroke) and Neile and many who could have been known to Frank such as Richard Montague, Matthew Wren (Fellow of Pembroke and then Master of Peterhouse) and John Cosin (Wren's successor at Peterhouse), all of whom became bishops.[5]

It would be particularly interesting to pursue the connection between Cosin and Frank; Frank was at Pembroke at the time when, just across the road, Cosin as Master of Peterhouse was acquiring a good deal of notoriety for his liturgical practice both at Peterhouse and at Durham Cathedral where, during his time as Prebendary, his lighting of candles on Candlemas Day had provoked a violent protest from another of the Prebendaries. Frank's own two surviving Candlemas sermons indicate a man who shared many of Cosin's enthusiasms.

It is time now to turn to the sermons themselves and to begin with some comments on the preacher's style. If Mark Frank was one of the finest of the 'witty' preachers, the wit in question is not a matter of humour; it is rather the combination of all the skills of oratory, imagination, learning and language in the service of what was seen as one of the highest and most serious art forms, the art of the pulpit. Of the preaching of Lancelot Andrewes, King James could comment - admiringly not disapprovingly - 'he playeth with his text, patting it to and fro, as a cat doth with a mouse', while George Herbert called this technique of squeezing the last drop of meaning out of a verse of scripture 'crumbling the text'. Frank does this, but, as May remarks, he is half way between Donne and Taylor and the exponents of a plainer style that came in during the reign of Charles II; he eschewed over-lengthy sentences and quotations and made intelligibility his principal aim.

The sermons are intensely biblical; the margins of the LACT edition are filled with the texts which are quoted in English, Latin and Greek or (more rarely) Hebrew either directly or by allusion, but the whole of his thinking and his language is steeped in the Bible. They are also intensely patristic; among the Western Fathers he cites are Leo, Ambrose, Augustine, Peter Chrysologus, Pope Gregory, Bede, Bernard (a particular favourite) and Peter Damian and among the Eastern Fathers John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa and Epiphanius. He can at times - as we shall see - be quite strongly critical of Rome, but he reserves his strongest and most deeply felt criticism for the Puritans. He is, I believe, the Mariological preacher *par excellence* of the 17th century in the Church of England, but before we take a closer look at some of the sermons which directly address this theme, let us first of all, in order to set his Mariological preaching in its context, give some examples of his general theological position.

He does not spend much time in his sermons debating the vexed topic of predestination. When he does broach the subject he is clearly anti-Calvinist, as in this passage in the Fourth Sermon on Christmas Day, in which he attacks those who will

allow Christ 'neither to save, nor come to save, anybody but "the elect",' who limit his coming 'only to a few, and all the rest excluded by some inevitable decree':

> It is neither a true nor faithful saying, nor much worth the accepting, as many receivers as it has, that says otherwise, that binds up his coming only to the elect. For if not for all, they may be out, for all their brags; may be too righteous to be in, among the sinners; among the righteous, that he says himself he came not for. This saying that we are for, 'that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, is a faithful saying, worthy all acceptation,' even the chiefest the world affords, - to be received by all, whilst itself rejects none.[6]

His sense of the Church and of the Church's liturgy is extremely strong; here, for example is how he expounds his text *Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord* on the First Sunday in Advent:

> The multitudes before is the Jewish synagogue, the multitudes behind, the Christian Church; a multitude, indeed, that cannot be numbered, of emperors, and kings, and princes; bishops and priests; doctors, martyrs, confessors, and virgins, all in their several orders and generations, crying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David'... All these multitudes - the Jew, with his multitude of patriarchs, priests, and Levites, and singers, and prophets, with his sacrifices of bulls, and rams, and goats, and sheep, of types and figures, all crying out Messiah is coming; - the Christians, apostles, martyrs, confessors, doctors, virgins, bishops, priests, and deacons, and all several orders in their choirs and churches throughout the world, crying out He is come; all the corners of the earth resounding out Hosannas and Allelujahs to him. *Una est fides praecedentium atque sequentium populorum,* says St Gregory; All believing and professing the same He that cometh here; they, the Jews, before, crying 'He that cometh'; we, the Christians, crying 'He that is come,' or rather, He that cometh still, that every day comes to us by his grace, and through his word and in his sacraments: 'Blessed is he that cometh' still, not a tense or tittle changed.
>
> So now the congregation is full, what should we do but begin our service? when we have Law, and Prophets, and Gospel to countenance and bear us company in our Te Deum and Benedictus, at our prayers and praises, in our joys and festivals; all of them crying nothing but Christ, nothing but Christ, blessed be he, blessed be he, and blessed be his coming, and blessed be his day, and blessed be his deeds; the whole practice of all Christian churches and congregations that ever were gathered together *in nomine Domini*, 'in the name of the Lord,' till these mere nominal verbal Christians, that are afraid of the name of Him that cometh, of the Name of Jesus, of blessing it or bowing at it; all Christians, all that came before in the name of Christ, till these pretenders that follow nobody but their own fancies; all agreeing in the same welcome to their Redeemer, joining in the same prayers

and praises: what should we do but add our voices and sing with them?[7]

This excerpt gives us a glimpse both of his eloquence and also of his bitterness towards the Puritans; it gives too a glimpse of his sense of hierarchy and of the plurality of vocations within the Church - a plurality which ought to embrace the vocation to the religious life, since there is a reference to the order of virgins and an earlier reference to 'orders of religious men'. In one of his Candlemas sermons he refers to 'Anna the religious' and Canon Allchin points out that he was known as a young man to have had a close association with the Little Gidding community and a deep friendship with the nephew of Nicholas Ferrar, the community's founder, who was also called Nicholas Ferrar. But his Advent Sunday sermon at least seems to have been preached during the period of Puritan dominance after the dissolution of the Little Gidding community,[8] for he continues:

> Indeed true it is, God has turned our songs of joy into the voice of weeping (as the prophet complains); taken away our feasts and gaudy days; and we may well cry, and cry aloud in that sadder sense of the word 'crying': yet for all that, must we not lay down the other, or forget the song of prayer and praise, especially upon the point of Christ's coming to us.[9]

This strong sense of, and delight in, the Church's liturgy includes a delight in music that finds expression in many of his sermons and particularly in this Advent sermon:

> Three parts there are in it as in other songs, *bassus, tenor,* and *altus* - the bass, the tenor and the treble. 'Hosanna to the Son of David;' there is the bass, the deepest and lowest note, the humanity of Christ *in filio David*, being 'the Son of David:' the bass sings that, that is low indeed for him, we can go no lower. 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;' there is the tenor or middle part, he and the name of the Lord joined together, God and man united - that is a note higher than the first, the Mediator between God and man; God in the highest, Son of David in the lowest; the middle note then follows. And *Hosanna in altissimis*, the *altus* or treble, the highest note of all: we can reach no higher, strain we never so high.[10]

His sense of the Church appropriately includes a strong sense of authority, of an authority in which tradition forms an important constitutive element. In his hard hitting sermon of 1641, preached at Paul's Cross, he can say:

> Authority used to be a logical argument to guide our reason: and have we lost our logic too, as well as our obedience? The consent of wise, grave, learned fathers, (till you know where to find better,) with any man not too high in his own conceit, is certainly of a value somewhat above his private imagination. For, who tells you they are deceived? Your private minister? And are you sure he is not? And are they deceived? And is it not as likely that you and he should be? Were they not as wise as you - as just

as you - as devout as you? Have you reason, and had not they? Do you use Scripture, and did not they? Had they interests, and have not you? That all should be deceived, till you and your new ministers came into the world, is morally impossible.[11]

He goes on to make a strong defence of episcopacy in words which would hardly have been music to the ears of the Lord Mayor and Corporation:

> Bishops are fathers by their title, the fathers of the Church; so the first Christians, so all since, till this new unchristian Christianity started up. Fathers in God, it is their style; however some of late, sons of Belial, would make them fathers in the devil, antichrists; perhaps, that they might make them like themselves. Strange antichrists to whom Christ hath left the governing of his Church these 1500 years! [12]

Having made himself on this occasion so thoroughly unpopular with his audience, he continues with a defence of outward ceremonies:

> May not I as lawfully serve my God in a reverent posture, as thou in a saucy and irreverent garb? Is it superstition in me to stand, because thou sittest or leanest on thy elbow? Is it idolatry in me to kneel, because thou wilt not foul thy clothes, or vex thy knees? Strange must it needs be, that sitting, leaning, lolling, must be law and canon, where no set behaviour is expressed, and my reverence only be against it; made innovation which law never forbad, custom has retained. When you can bring me law against my standing, bowing, kneeling, which yourselves know custom has observed, where uniform order has been kept, I shall either submit or answer.[13]

He uses his Whitsunday sermons also to speak about the authority of Councils and of the episcopate. Thus in his Third Sermon he can say :

> In matters of doubt and controversy, send to the Church, to Jerusalem, to the Apostles and Elders there convened in council, and let them determine it, so we find it done. In a lawful and full assembly of the learned Fathers of the Church such shall be determined; - that is the way to settle truth.[14]

And speaking of the bishops as successors of the Apostles, he can say in the Fourth Sermon:

> That soul which breaks the bond of unity, and divides itself from the Church of Christ, from the company of the Apostles and their successors, the still fathers of it, cannot hold this holy wind, cannot enclose this holy fire; they are broken and cracked, crack only of the Spirit, but are really broken from that body in which only the Spirit moves.[15]

Mark Frank has also a very high doctrine of the ministerial priesthood, of the link between priesthood and the sacraments and of the sacrificial role of the Christian priesthood. In his First Sermon on the Circumcision he can say:

> A new Church has its new sacraments ... new sacrifices ...a new priesthood to offer them; 'an unchangeable priesthood' now. Christ our high-priest, and the 'ministers of the new testament' as so many under-priests, to offer them up to God. Christ offered himself as sacrifice; offers up also our prayers and praises to his Father; has left his ministers, in his name and merits, to do it too. And this, a lasting priesthood, is to last for ever.
>
> We have a new altar, too - so S. Paul - 'an altar that they which served the tabernacle have no power to eat of'. Take it for the cross, on which Christ offered up himself; or take it for the holy table, where that great sacrifice of his is daily commemorated in Christian churches: *habemus* says the Apostle; such a one we have, and I am sure it is 'new'.[16]

The idea he pursues in his Second Sermon on the Purification, when he invites his hearers to contemplate Simeon (whom he holds to be a priest) taking the child Jesus into his arms, and makes a comparison that we might not expect to find in any pre-Tractarian Anglican:

> But the Christian priest does more, blesses the child too. No priest of the law could do that: it is the minister of the Gospel only that can do that; that has that authority, to consecrate, and bless, and take, and all. He it is that blesses the dead elements, and quickens them into holy things by the ministration of his office, by the virtue of his function. Till he blesses, they are but common bread and wine; when he has taken and offered them, then they are holy; then they are the means, and pledges, and seals of grace; then they convey Christ unto the faithful receiver's soul. This is the mystery of the Gospel and so I speak it; not literally of Christ's person, but mystically of his body and blood, as offered and taken in the sacrament.[17]

It is time now - at last - to turn to the sermons which have a directly Mariological bearing. I begin with the Second Sermon on Christmas Day with its brilliant and beautiful opening:[18]

> *And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*
>
> I shall not need to tell you who this 'she', or who this 'him'. The day rises with it in its wings. This day wrote it with the first ray of the morning sun upon the posts of the world. The angels sung it in their choirs, the morning stars together in their courses. The Virgin Mother, the Eternal Son. The most blessed among women, the fairest of the sons of men. The woman clothed with the sun: the son compassed with a woman. She the gate of

heaven: he the King of Glory that came forth. She the mother of the everlasting God: he God without a mother; God blessed for evermore. Great persons as ever met upon a day.

Yet as great as the persons, and as great as the day, the great lesson of them both is to be little, to think and make little of ourselves; seeing the infinite greatness in this day become so little, Eternity a child, the rays of glory wrapt in rags, Heaven crowded into the corner of a stable, and He that is everywhere want a room.

I may at other times have spoken great and glorious things both of the persons and the day: but I am determined today to know nothing but Jesus Christ in rags, but Jesus Christ in a manger. And I hope I shall have your company along.[19]

A little later in the same sermon he ponders on the lowliness of Mary:

But, if he would be born of a woman, could he not have chosen an othergates than 'she', than a poor carpenter's wife? Some great queen or lady had been fitter far to have made as it were the Queen of Heaven, and mother to the heir of all the world. But *respexit humilitatem ancillae*, it was the lowliness of this his holy handmaid that he looked to; it was for her humility he chose to be born of her before any other: that we may know, 1, whom it is that the Eternal Wisdom will vouchsafe to dwell with, even the humble and lowly; and, 2, we may see he even studies to descend as low as possible, that so even the meanest might come to him without fear; that, 3, we should henceforth despise no man for his parentage nor bear ourselves high upon our birth and stock.

Our descent and kindred are no such business to make us proud. Christ comes as soon to the low cottage as to the loftiest palace, to the handmaid as to the mistress, to the poor as to the rich; nay, prefers them here, honours a poor humble maid above all the gallant ladies of the world.[20]

He continues with a reflexion on the way in which every Christian like Mary has to 'bring forth' Christ:

I hope we have showed you mystery enow, and you have seen humility enough. But it is not enough to see the one or the other, unless now we take up the Virgin Mary's part, which is behind, bring forth this First-born to ourselves; suffer him to be born in us, who was born for us; and bring forth Christ in our lives, wrap him and lay him up with all the tenderness of a mother. The pure virgin pious soul is this 'she' that brings forth Christ; the nourishing and cherishing of him and all his gifts and graces,

is this wrapping him in swaddling clothes; the laying up his word, his promise and precepts in our hearts, is the laying him in the manger.[21]

Whenever Mark Frank is preaching at a Eucharist, as on this occasion, he always works up to a sacramental conclusion; this is how he does it on Christmas Day:

What though there be no room for them in the inn? I hope there is in our houses for him. It is Christmas time, and let us keep open house for him; let his rags be our Christmas raiment, his manger our Christmas cheer, his stable our Christmas great chamber, hall, dining room. We must clothe with him, and feed with him, and lodge with him at this feast. He is now ready by and by to give Himself to eat; you may see him wrapped ready in the swaddling clothes of his blessed sacrament; you may behold him laid upon the altar as in his manger. Do but make room for him, and we will bring him forth, and you shall look upon him, and handle him, and feed upon him: bring we only the rags of a rent and torn and broken and contrite heart, the white linen cloths of pure intentions and honest affections to swathe him in, wrap him up fast, and lay him close to our souls and bosoms. It is a day of mysteries; it is a mysterious business we are about; Christ wrapped up, Christ in the sacrament, Christ in a mystery; let us be content to let it go so, believe, admire and adore it.[22]

Let us turn now to the First Sermon on the Epiphany. It is interesting to note that Frank is well aware of the full range of meaning to be given to the Feast. He speaks of the 'three Epiphanies the Church reckons upon this day', that to the Wise Men, that at his Baptism and that at Cana, 'all three commemorated upon this day; the First in the Gospel, the other two in the two Second Lessons for the day'. He is eloquent about the Wise Men's journey:

Many a weary step had they trod, many a fruitless question had they asked, many an unprofitable search had they made to find him; and, behold, yet they will not give over. Twelve days it had cost them to come to Jerusalem, through the Arabian deserts, over the Arabian mountains, both Arabia Deserta and Petraea: the difficulty of the way, through sands and rocks - the danger of the passages, being infamous for robbers - the cold and hardness of a deep winter season - the hazard and inconvenience of so long, so hard, so unseasonable, so dangerous, and I may say so uncertain a journey, could no whit deter them from their purpose: to Jerusalem they will, through all these difficulties.[23]

He is, however, even more eloquent when he describes their arrival at the house at Bethlehem:

I do not wonder that interpreters make this house the church of God. It is the gate and court of heaven, now Christ is here; angels sing round about it, all holiness is in it, now Christ is in it: here all the creatures,

reasonable and unreasonable, come to pay their homage to their Creator; hither they come, even from the ends of the earth, to their devotions; 'a house of prayer' it is 'for all people', Gentiles and all; hither they come to worship, hither they come to pay their offerings and their vows; here is the shrine and altar, the glorious Virgin's lap, where the Saviour of the world is laid to be adored and worshipped; here stands the star for tapers to give it light; and here the wise men this day become priests - worship and offer, present prayers and praises, for themselves and the whole world besides; all people of the world, high and low, learned and ignorant, represented by them.[24]

We pass now to the two sermons preached on Candlemas Day, the first in the morning preached at the Eucharist, the second preached on the same day at Evensong.

Near the beginning of the first sermon he alludes to the traditional ceremonies associated with the day:

> For this day also of his presentation, as well as those other days of his birth, circumcision and manifestation - Candlemas-day as well as Christmas-day, New-year's-day or Epiphany, is a day of blessing; a day of God's blessing us, and our blessing of him again; of Christ's being presented for us, and our presenting to him again; of his presenting in the temple, and our presenting ourselves in the church, to bless God and him for his presentation, his presentation-day, and our Candlemas, our little candles, our petty lights; our souls reflecting back to this great Light, that was this day presented in the temple and then darted down upon us.[25]

He goes on to enumerate those who were present that day and 'none so good but stands in need of him ... that will want a Saviour ... if not among sinners, yet among the righteous':

> Mary the blessed, Joseph the just, Simeon the devout, Anna the religious, all in to-day, secular and religious, of all sexes and orders; all come in today, as at the end of Christmas; like the chorus to the angels' choir, to bear a part in the angels' anthem, to make up a full choir of voices to glorify God for this great present, which brings peace to the earth, and good-will among men.[26]

If he affirms, as of course does the Tradition of Catholic Christendom, that Mary too has need of a Saviour, he can still in the course of this sermon refer to her as 'that most pure and immaculate Virgin'. He permits himself an ironic comment on his contemporaries too:

> From Bethlehem to Jerusalem is a pretty walk to go with a young child to offer; but where God commands, there is no gainsaying. There is no burden neither to such souls as just Josephs and blessed Marys, and the child will get no cold by the way it goes to God: our niceness makes the trouble, and betrays us to the fear. The child gets no hurt by being carried to the font; nor did it in devouter times, when it was wholly dipped, no more than so great a pain as circumcision hurt the infant's health. Our tenderness and fooleries, who have not faith enough to trust God with them, or to submit mildly to God's ordinances, are the only causes of all miscarriages in holy business.[27]

The morning sermon works up to a magnificent peroration which is, as we would expect, thoroughly and explicitly eucharistic. We can detect a note of regret for the passing of the former Candlemas ceremonies and an allusion surely to the two candles on the altar in the reference to the 'two candles of faith and good works':

> It is Candlemas to-day, - so-called from the lighting up of candles, offering them, consecrating them, and bearing them in procession; a custom from the time of Justinian the Emperor, at the latest about 1100 years ago; or as others say Pope Gelasius, anno 496, or thereabouts; - to show that long expected Light of the Gentiles was now come, was now sprung up and shined brighter than the sun at noon, and might be taken in our hands. Let the ceremony pass, reserve the substance; light up the two candles of faith and good works, light them with the fire of charity; bear we them burning in our hands, as Christ commands us; meet we him 'with our lamps burning,' consecrate we also them, all our works and actions, with our prayers; offer we them then upon the altars of the Lord of Hosts, to his honour and glory, and go we to the altars of the God of our salvation, *bini et bini*, as St Bernard speaks, as in procession, 'two and two,' in peace and unity together; and with this solemnity and preparation, we poor oxen and asses may come and approach to our Master's crib. The crib is the outward elements, wherein he lies wrapped up; they are the swaddling clothes and mantles, with which his body is covered when he is now offered up to God, and taken up by us. Take them, and take him; the candle of faith will there show you him, and the candle of charity will light him down into your arms, that you may embrace him. We embrace where we love, we take into our arms whom we love; so that love Jesus and embrace Jesus - love Jesus and take Jesus - love Jesus and take him into our hands, and into our arms, and into our mouths, and into our hearts.[28]

The same candlelight theme reappears in the evening sermon; here is a part of his conclusion which leads into a moving and passionate doxology:

> Light up now your candles at this evening service, for the glory of your morning sacrifice: it is Candlemas. Become we all burning and shining lights, to do honour to this day, and the blessed armful of it. Let your souls shine bright with grace, your hands with good works; ... Walk we 'as children of the light', and as so many walking lights; and offer we ourselves up like so many holy candles to the Father of Light.[29]

We come finally to the Sermon on the Annunciation in which he expounds most fully his Marian theology. Let us begin at the beginning:

> *And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.*
>
> The day will tell you who this 'blessed among women' is; we call it our Lady-day; and the text will tell you why she comes into the day, because the Angel today came in to her. And the Angel will tell you why he today came in to her; she was 'highly favoured', and 'the Lord was with her', was to come himself this day into her, to make her the most 'blessed among women,' - sent him only before to tell her so, - to tell her, he would be with her by and by himself.
>
> This makes it Annunciation-day, the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, as the Church calls it, and the annunciation to her, as we may call it too.[30]

He explains very clearly the double sense of the word 'annunciation' in a way that anticipates the 20th century liturgical change which now calls the feast the Annunciation of the Lord, the Annunciation of our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary:

> So the Incarnation of Christ, and the Annunciation of the blessed Virgin, - his being incarnate of her, and her blessedness by him, and all our blessednesses in him with her, make it as well our Lord's as our Lady's day. More his, because his being Lord made her a Lady, else a poor carpenter's wife, God knows; all her worthiness and honour, as all ours, is from him; and we to take heed today, or any day, of parting them; or so remembering her, as to forget him; or so blessing her, as to take away any of our blessing him; any of his worship, to give to her. Let her blessedness, the respect we give her, be *inter mulieres*, 'among women' still; such as is fit and proportionate to weak creatures, not due and proper only to the Creator, that *Dominus tecum*, Christ in her be the business; we take pattern by the Angel, to give her no more than is her due, yet to be sure to give her that though, and that particularly upon the day.[31]

In his anxiety to present a balanced theology he then indulges in one of his very rare attacks on the Roman Catholic Church, only to follow it with an even stronger attack on the Puritans, whom in a striking and poignant phrase he accuses of wounding our Lord 'through our Lady's sides':

> The only wonder indeed to us, will be to hear of an *Ave* Mary. Indeed, I cannot myself but wonder at it, as they use it now, to see it turned into a prayer. It was never made for prayer or praise, - a mere salutation. The Angel's here to the blessed Virgin never intended it, I dare say, for other, either to praise her with, or to pray unto her. And I shall not consider it as

> such. I am only for the Angel's *Ave*, not the popish *Ave Maria*; I can see no such in the text.
>
> Nor should I scarce, I confess, have chosen such a theme today, though the Gospel reach it to me, but that I see it is time to do it, when our Lord is wounded through our Lady's sides; both our Lord and the mother of our Lord, most vilely spoken of by a new generation of wicked men, who, because the Romanists make little less of her than a goddess, they make not so much of her as a good woman: because they bless her too much, these unbless her quite, at least they will not suffer her to be blessed as she should.[32]

He tries carefully to steer a middle path between two extremes and he insists, as do indeed all the recent conciliar and papal texts from the Roman Catholic Church, that all Mary's glory comes from the Lord:

> She hath a Lord, - is a subject as well as we. And lastly, all her blessedness is but *inter mulieres*, 'among women'; how much soever she excels all women, she is but *inter mulieres*, among such creatures, in the rank of creatures; no goddess, nor partner with the Godhead, either in title or worship.
>
> By considering and laying all these points together, we shall both vindicate the blessed Virgin's honour, as well as from all superstitious as profane abuses, and ourselves from all neglect of any duty to the mother of our Lord, - one so highly favoured and blessed by him, whilst we give her all that either Lord or Angel gave her; but yet dare not give her more.[33]

Though he claims not to give our Lady 'other titles than the Scripture gives her', he does in fact go further:

> ... But to such a virgin, one so highly favoured as to be made the mother of God, (for the mother of Christ is no less, he being God,) what messenger could come less than an angel? Prophets and patriarchs were too little for so great an embassage, and angels never came upon a greater.[34]

And again:

> Of a high and illustrious name besides; *Maria* is *maris stella*, says S. Bede, 'the star of the sea', a fit name for the mother of the bright Morning Star that rises out of the vast sea of God's infinite and endless love. Maria the Syriac interprets *domina*, a lady, a name yet retained, and given to her by all Christians; our Lady, or the Lady Mother of our Lord.[35]

He goes on, in a profound meditation on the greeting *Dominus tecum*, 'The Lord is with thee', to make his highest claim for the Blessed Virgin, 'that God is with her', so Professor Root sums it up, 'as he is and has been with no other creature'.[36]

He is not with her, as he is with any else, *Tecum in mente, tecum in ventre*, as the Fathers gloss it; *Tecum in spiritu, tecum in carne*, with her he was, or would be presently, as well in her body as in her soul, personally, essentially, nay bodily with her, and take a body from her, - a way of being with any never heard before or since, - a being with her beyond any expression or conception whatsoever.[37]

It will seem strange to us today that, in spite of his almost lyrical exaltation of Our Lady, Mark Frank will not allow the legitimacy of the *Ave Maria* or of any direct invocation addressed to her or to any of the saints. Both in this sermon and in the two sermons delivered on All Saints' Day he goes out of his way to defend the honour due to the saints. This embraces their burial places, for 'even the lodgings of their very ashes seem to exult with a kind of joy to be made the receptacles and cabinets of those jewels of the Almighty, and their sepulchres and memorials are blessed for ever more'. He commends the custom of the primitive Church of naming the saints in thanksgiving 'even at the altar itself'; the saints are to be honoured, but honoured 'with our praises, I say, but not our prayers'. It is not that he denies that they now 'guard us round with ... their earnest prayers for their afflicted brethren', but he prefers to lay emphasis on the fact that they also require our prayers 'for their perfection and consummation, and our own - for 'they without us shall not be made perfect''. More than that he affirms Scripture will not allow.[38]

But let us return to - and conclude with - the Sermon on the Annunciation. He sums up his message in this words :

> Give we her in God's name the honour due to her. God hath styled her 'blessed' by the Angel, by Elizabeth; commanded all generations to call her so, and they hitherto have done it, and let us do it too.[39]

And, since the Eucharist is being celebrated, he has to draw together, as is his wont, the theme of the day and the theme of the Sacrament:

> Yet not to such at any time more fully than in the blessed Sacrament to which we are now a-going. There he is strangely with us, highly favours us, exceedingly blesses us; there we are all made blessed Marys, and become mothers, sisters, and brothers of our Lord, whilst we hear his word, and conceive it in us; whilst we believe him who is the Word, and receive him too into us. There angels come to us on heavenly errands, and there our Lord indeed is with us; and we are blessed, and the angels hovering all about to peep into those holy mysteries, think us so, and call us so.[40]

At this critical juncture in the history of the Church of England I find the life and writings of Mark Frank particularly moving. It is a time when many Catholic Anglicans are abandoning the Church of England, moving from a conviction that their Church has betrayed its Catholic heritage to a profound doubt as to whether that heritage was ever anything more than an illusion, a beautiful dream but only a dream.

The study of the Arminian movement in the 17th century forces one to confront fundamental questions about the catholicity of the Church of England, to try to explain how after the long, harsh winter of Calvinist domination a profound, tender and passionate Catholic instinct in doctrine and spirituality could spring up and produce such natural, healthy and luxuriant foliage so soon after the tree of catholic doctrine and devotion seemed to have been cut down to the very roots in the 'stripping of the altars' in the Elizabethan period. What, if anything, does that say about the hidden roots that remained? What, if anything, does that give us as a message of hope in another bleak period today?

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NOTES

1. The title of the series must surely be one of the earliest examples of the use of the term 'Anglo-Catholic'
2. With apologies to *The Quest for Corvo* by A.J.A. Symons (Penguin Books, 1940); a biography (of the writer Frederick Rolfe) in the form of a detective enquiry
3. Since this paper was delivered in March there has been published *Covenant of Grace Renewed: A Vision of the Eucharist in the Seventeenth Century* by Kenneth Stevenson, which refers to Frank and quotes one of his Candlemas sermons (pp 189-190)
4. It is usual however to reserve the use of this title for the efforts of John Mason Neale and others to apply the theological insights of the Oxford Movement to the fields of church architecture and liturgical practice in the mid 19th century
5. cf Nicholas Tyacke: *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c 1590-1640* (paperback edition, O.U.P., 1990), esp. chapter 2: 'Cambridge University and Arminianism'. For a poignant evocation of this Cambridge scene in fiction, cf Rose Macaulay: *They Were Defeated* (Collins, London, 1960)
6. Mark Frank: *Sermons*, the Fourth Sermon on Christmas-Day, Vol 1 p 113
7. op cit, A Sermon on the First Sunday in Advent, Vol 1 pp 7-8
8. None of the sermons is dated, except for that delivered in 1641 at St Paul's Cross. But if some, such as the Sermon on the First Sunday in Advent, were almost certainly preached during the period of his deprivation, others were clearly delivered after the Restoration of Charles II. There are clear references to this event in the Sixth Sermon on Christmas Day and in the two sermons preached in St Paul's Cathedral
9. op cit. A Sermon on the First Sunday in Advent. Vol 1, pp 8-9
10. op cit, ibid, p 10
11. op cit, A Sermon Preached at S. Paul's Cross, Vol II, p 421
12. ibid, p 433
13. ibid, p 431
14. op cit, The Third Sermon on Whitsunday, Vol II, pp 234
15. op cit, The Fourth Sermon on Whitsunday, Vol II, p 244
16. op cit, The First Sermon on the Circumcision, Vol I, pp 252-3
17. op cit, The Second Sermon on the Purification, Vol 1, p 362. He goes on to say of the Eucharist that it 'cannot be offered but by the hands to which Christ committed that power and authority'; ibid. p 362
18. Frank rather specializes in dramatic openings. This is how he begins his Sermon on S. Stephen's Day: 'Yesterday's Child is today, you see, become a man. He that yesterday could neither stand nor go, knew not the right hand from the left, lay helpless as it were in the bosom of his mother, is today presented to us standing at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father ...' op cit, A Sermon on S. Stephen's Day, Vol I, p 213
19. op cit, The Second Sermon on Christmas-Day, Vol 1, p 77
20. ibid, pp 79-80
21. ibid, pp 89 - 90
22. ibid, p 90

23. op cit, The First Sermon on the Epiphany, Vol 1, p 277
24. ibid, p 280
25. op cit, The First Sermon on the Purification, Vol I, p 340
26. ibid, p 341
27. ibid, p 351
28. ibid, p 358
29. op cit, The Second Sermon on the Purification, Vol I, p 376
30. op cit, A Sermon on the Annunciation, Vol II, p 33
31. ibid, p 34
32. ibid, pp 35-36
33. ibid, p 37
34. ibid, p 38. Again, a little later, on the title *Deipara* - 'as the Church, against all heretics, has ever styled her the Mother of God', ibid p 40
35. ibid, pp 39-40
36. In *An Anglican Divine on Mary*, op cit, p 321
37. op cit, A Sermon on the Annunciation, Vol II, pp 43-44
38. op cit, Vol II, pp 336 - 375, passim
39. op cit, A Sermon on the Annunciation, Vol II, p 50
40. ibid, pp 50-51